



The Newsletter of the Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society



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Summer Issue

July 1999

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Paul Hammerschmidt

I hope your summer is progressing favorably. Vacations seem to be the norm this time of year and I was no different. It's amazing what a week away from the office can do for you. A week of R&R plus a week of new crisis to-do's waiting when you get back.

Charlie is working hard in planning the ArkLaTex 2000 joint meeting. Unfortunately the Texas Legislature tightened the screws on out of state travel for state agencies. Consequently, since this year's meeting is planned for Shreveport, Louisiana, Charlie is having to make alternate arrangements, at least for TPW employees planning to go to this year's meeting, to stay somewhere in Texas. Please help him out where you can.

AS A REMINDER to all who presented papers at last year's meeting, if you have not already done so, Gordon Linam needs your manuscripts so he can prepare the Proceedings of the meeting.

Lastly, regarding the TCAFS Fisheries Worker Directory, if you have submitted your information, please check it and make corrections where necessary. If you have not submitted your information, please do so in order for the directory to be as complete as possible.

Thanks.

JUNE EXCOM MINUTES

by John Prentice

Persons present – Paul Hammerschmidt, Charlie Munger, John Moczygamba, Bruce Hysmith, and John Prentice.

Committee reports: Reports for standing committees were printed or presented at the meeting. One issue presented by Paul Hammerschmidt was that two committees (Publicity/Exhibits and Awards) still need someone to chair. If you are interested in these, please call Paul!!

Newsletter: There has been a smooth transition from Charlie Munger to Brian Van Zee as editor. Paul noted that who ever takes over as the newsletter editor next year should work with Brian to allow for another smooth transition. Volume 25, Number 1 of our newsletter was sent out to 1988 and 1999 members. This and following issues will go only to 1999 members. Kinko's printed, folded and metered 200 copies for a cost of \$242.00 (about \$1.21 per copy). In addition, nearly 160 newsletters were sent via e-mail which saved us approximately \$194.00

Continuing Education: Topics for the next annual meeting were discussed including: 1) sampling with sonar (including side-scan sonar); 2) interpretation of electrophoresis data; 3) plant control problems including *Salvinia*; and 4) exotic species regulations issues.



Student outreach: A mini-handbook for graduate students is being initiated which will include information on resumes/vitae, scientific presentations/seminars, abstract composition, proposal writing and tips on interviews. This is planned to be ready by the next annual meeting.

Fisheries workers directory: Requests for updated information on the list will be made via postcards which will be printed postpaid for automation.

TCAFS home page: Web-site maintenance has been ongoing. A CD-ROM of fish pictures has been received from Joe Tommerelli. Malcolm Johnson paid Joe \$105 which covers costs of \$80 for 1,000 copies of the pond management manual using the fish pictures and \$25 for cost of the CD images. Gordon Linam and the editorial committee has been busy completing the document for inclusion in the Web site.

2000 annual meeting plans: "ArkLaTx 2000" continues to be planned and responses from the Arkansas and Louisiana chapters indicates a target city of Shreveport, LA or that area. Attendance is expected to be near 130 persons with Texas maintaining the largest attendance portion at around 80. The date is tentatively set for January 23-25. With the concern for Texas out-of-state travel, there may be a hotel/motel setup in Texas with transportation arranged to Shreveport. Details remain to be worked out with each chapter having certain responsibilities.



Volunteers are needed to chair one of the following committees: AWARDS and PUBLICITY/EXHIBITS

AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY 1999 ANNUAL MEETING

The 129th Annual AFS Parent Society Meeting is scheduled for 29 August-2 September at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Charlotte, North Carolina. This years theme is "Integrating Fisheries Principles from Mountain to Marine Habitats". Rates at the Adam's Mark Hotel are only \$85 for up to four people per room. A student block of 25 rooms is available for a reduced rate of \$65, and 15% of the AFS reserved block of rooms is available at the government rate of \$69. Rates do not include a 12% tax. These prices are available until 27 July on a space-available basis, so reserve early by calling 704/372-4100 or 800/444-ADAM and saying that you will be attending the AFS Annual Meeting. Discounted airfares with U.S. Airways are available, call the Meeting and Convention Reservation Office of U.S. Airways at 800/334-8644; 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (select option "1" when making the call) and refer to Gold File number 34630829. You can also get reduced rates from AVIS car rentals by calling 800/331-1600 and refer to AVIS Worldwide Discount (AWD) number J096405. For more information on the meeting, visit the AFS World Wide Web site, <http://www.fisheries.org/annual99/index.htm>. For more information on Charlotte and its many attractions, access <http://www.charlottecvb.org>.

ArkLaTex 2000



The annual meeting for the Texas Chapter AFS will be a joint meeting with the Arkansas and Louisiana Chapters.

Where: **Bossier City, LA**
When: **January 23-25, 2000**

Watch for more information in the newsletter and on the web site.

Mark your calendars for this upcoming event.





Resource News

This section of the Newsletter has news releases that relate to aquatic resources. The news releases were received over the internet and I thought they might be of interest to some of you.

Rare Trout Are Making Quite a Splash

by Terry Rodgers
San Diego Union

Scientific tests indicate that trout found last winter in San Mateo Creek in Southern California are southern steelhead, a rare fish that has adapted to Southern California's arid climate and prickly landscape.

If the tests pass scrutiny by federal scientists, the findings could force the government to extend its current extinction boundary for southern steelhead an additional 120 miles to the south into San Diego County.

Conservationists hailed the test results as proof that nature has defied conclusions of the bureaucracy. A population that federal biologists had written off as extinct has reappeared.

"These are now the rarest of all the steelhead in the world," said Allen Greenwood of San Diego Trout, a trout conservation group. "It's time now for the National Marine Fisheries Service to protect them."

Despite the evidence, biologists at the Long Beach office of the fisheries service remained skeptical.

In an interview yesterday, Jim Lecky, assistant regional administrator, said even if the trout are proven beyond all doubt to be steelhead, the fish must pass a less scientific test.

Lecky said he needs to be convinced that the San Mateo Creek trout are a "sustainable" population-- a permanent group, rather than one that will become extinct in a year or two.

While sporadic sightings of steelhead in San Mateo Creek have been reported for decades, a lack of documentary evidence prompted the National Marine Fisheries Service two years ago to declare southern steelhead extinct south of Malibu Creek, north of Los Angeles.

The new test results show that a sample trout taken from San Mateo Creek was the offspring of a female steelhead who developed her eggs while living in the ocean.

"This proves that the fish wasn't planted by someone who got a hold of some freshwater trout" and surreptitiously put them in the stream, said Alex Vejar, a fisheries biologist in San Diego with the state Fish and Game Department.

"What this shows is that the fish had to come from the ocean, then move upstream and spawn," Vejar said.

While the test results are preliminary, the lab findings bolster scientists' observations at the creek that the fish, which were discovered in February, looked like steelhead.

Vejar, who has been removing non-native bullhead, bass and sunfish from the trout pools about 10 miles from the mouth of the creek, estimates there are 30 or more steelhead there.

The analysis of the San Mateo trout was done by Oregon State University scientists who tested the otoliths, said Rober Titus, a state fisheries biologist in Sacramento.

"Personally, I regard San Mateo Creek as a steelhead stream--period," said Titus.

Such confidence contrasts sharply with the hedging by federal scientists.

Lecky of the National Marine Fisheries Service said if he and his team conclude that the steelhead are likely to die off during a drought, the agency may not recommend extending the steelhead extinction boundary or listing the area as critical habitat.

"The question is, is there a sustainable population down there and does it need to be incorporated into the population that's already listed," he said.

Lecky said he also wanted to examine the results of genetic tests, which are still being done at the Hopkins Marine Laboratory operated by Stanford University.

Dennis McEwen, a state biologist and steelhead expert, said the fisheries service seems to be applying a tougher standard to the trout found in San Mateo Creek than elsewhere in its West Coast range, which extends across the Pacific Northwest into Canada and Alaska.

"Nowhere else in the range of steelhead do we subject them to this kind of detailed analysis just to prove they need protection," said McEwen. "We have a naturally spawning population of native fish down there, and they should be protected.

"Critics say the fisheries service has not moved quickly enough to protect the rare steelhead, which are biologically important because they may contain genes that could help the species survive.

"The National Marine Fisheries Service has done nothing to protect them, which is absurd," said Greenwood, the San Diego conservationist. "There are fewer of these fish in San Mateo Creek than there are California condors, and the government has spent millions to save the condors."

Lecky bristled at the suggestion his agency is dragging its feet.

"Just because someone found a fish in a stream outside the range doesn't mean I'm going to apply" the federal Endangered Species Act, he said. "I'm going to do an analysis to determine if it's warranted."

REMOVAL OF MAINE DAM HAS LESSONS FOR NORTHWEST

The Edwards Dam on Maine's Kennebec River will be removed today through an agreement forged by state, federal and local agencies, conservation and fishing groups, and the dam's owner. This agreement resulted from a ruling by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that the enormous value of a free-flowing Kennebec River with healthy fish runs outweighs the value of the small amount of power produced by the dam.

"The removal of the Edwards Dam signals a shift in the way Americans value their rivers. No longer do we see our rivers as simply industrial workhorses to be harnessed. We now recognize the tremendous value of free-flowing rivers with healthy salmon runs," said Tim Stearns of Save Our Wild Salmon. "The economies, values and character of regions change over time and we need to take a fresh look at the uses of our rivers."

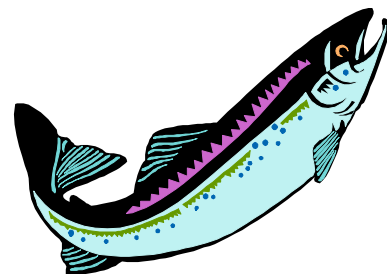
The Edwards Dam removal agreement shows that dams must each be judged on their own merits and that some dams no longer make sense. All possible alternatives to dam removal were studied and removal was clearly the best economic and scientific option for balancing the needs of industry, fishing and recreation businesses, the local community, and the fish and wildlife in the Kennebec River.

"We are not saying that all dams should go, but some are too expensive to keep and have inflicted too much environmental damage," said Rob Masonis of American Rivers. "We need to look at the benefits of dams in light of the negative effects on fish, jobs, and quality of life. In the Northwest, biology and economics are showing us that some dams, like the Elwha River dams and the four Lower Snake dams, are mistakes that need to be corrected."

While there are important differences between the Edwards and Lower Snake dams, the principle of taking an objective look at the costs and benefits of keeping a dam versus the value of restoring a free-flowing river and healthy salmon runs is the same.

"Each dam must be evaluated on its own merits and not every dam now makes sense. The Edwards case shows that dam removal can be a good business decision as well as a practical, doable step towards restoring healthy fish runs," said Glen Spain of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations. "Many citizens in the Northwest have reached a similar conclusion regarding the four Lower Snake dams."

"Maine's experience shows us that an intensive and informed public debate which looks at the merits of keeping and removing dams and does not preclude any options before all the information is in will result in good policy decisions," added Tim Stearns. "Some leaders in the Northwest are demanding that partial dam removal be taken off the table rather than fostering an open, informed public debate about all merits, costs and options."



JOIN THE TEXAS CHAPTER

If you are interested in joining or renewing your membership to the Texas Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, you can get membership materials at our web site <http://www.sdafs.org/tcafs/default.htm> or contact **Dr. Kevin Pope, Box 42125, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 79409-2125, (806) 742-2843, kpope@ttu.edu** or the newsletter editor to obtain application information.



Next Newsletter submission deadline:
August 25, 1999Fall Issue

Submissions are encouraged. Submit a hard copy or a .TXT file by mail or email to the editor at **tpw1a@arn.net**

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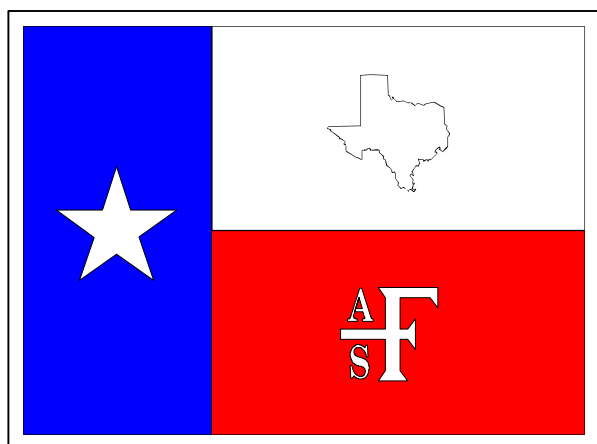
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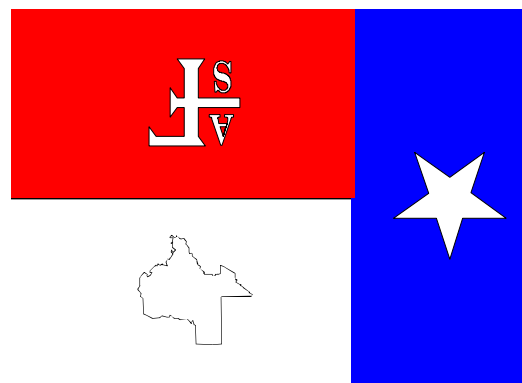
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